

REMARKS**STATUS OF CLAIMS**

Claims 2, 4, 6, 9-14 and 20-30 are allowed.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 15 and 17-19 are rejected.

In accordance with the foregoing, new claim 31 has been added. No new matter is presented in any of the foregoing amended claims and, accordingly, it is submitted that the same are proper for entry herein and such action is earnestly solicited.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 15 AND 17-19 UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102(e) AS BEING ANTICIPATED BY YAMAMOTO (U.S. PATENT NO. 5,923,337)

The rejections of claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 15 and 17-19 are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested.

On pages 2-3 of the Action, the Examiner states that Yamamoto discloses a plurality of unit image groups, each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, and being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer, citing column 11, lines 37-39 and 45-53 and column 12, lines 30-34 and 43-52.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's interpretation of Yamamoto. Yamamoto discloses selecting one or a combination of expressions, such as happiness, anger, surprise and so on (column 11, lines 26-30). Fig. 18 of Yamamoto shows the states of mind, and "the facial expression is selected from one of the five predetermined expressions including neutral, anger, sadness, surprise and happiness (see also column 12, lines 37-40).

Therefore, it appears that the Examiner considers the pre-selected combination of states of mind (e.g., sadness, anger, neutral, surprise and happiness) as a group made up of a plurality of sequential images. However, according to column 14, lines 32-44, and column 14, line 58 to column 15, line 3, of Yamamoto, each frame corresponds to "one state of mind". When one frame corresponds to one state of mind (or one communication information) it is impossible to distinguish, for example, a character waving goodbye from a character raising his arm (which are two different states of mind (different communication information)).

In contrast, the unit image groups of the present invention, as recited in independent claim 1, for example, are defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer. In other words, as an example, a unit image group may show a smiling face 15-1 (one communication information) with a sequence of images #1, #1+1, #1+2... (see Fig.

6 and page 22, lines 1-20, of the present specification). Further, the term “communication information” is clearly defined throughout the specification, and one of ordinary skill in the art would understand it to mean a meaning (mind set) that is to be conveyed to a person who sees the displayed humanoid character, for example. Each unit image group forms one sequential moving image unit, which is made up of a plurality of still images, and conveys one meaning. (See, for example, page 16, lines 12-20, of the present specification).

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that there is no indication in Yamamoto that each of the plurality of unit image groups is made up of a plurality of sequential images, where in each unit image group is guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a view; and each unit image group is specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the prior art. The other pending independent claims recite similar features to independent claim 1 and, thus, it is respectfully submitted that all pending independent claims patentably distinguish over the prior art for at least the reasons provided herein. The pending dependent claims inherit the patentability of their respective base claims and, thus, it is further submitted that the dependent claims also patentably distinguish over the prior art.

NEW INDEPENDENT CLAIM 31

New independent claim 31 recites that each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate *an individual* communication information to a viewer. Therefore, new independent claim 31 patentably distinguishes over the prior art for at least the reasons provided above for independent claim 1.

Further, new independent claim 31 further clarifies the feature of the present invention that each of the plurality of unit image groups indicates one, individual communication information.

REQUEST FOR EXAMINER INTERVIEW

If the Examiner deems the foregoing remarks to be unpersuasive, then the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned to schedule an Examiner interview at the earliest possible convenience, in order to discuss the distinguishing features of the present invention over the cited art.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims herein patentably distinguish over the rejections and the art of record and, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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